

REMARKS

In the Office Action dated February 25, 2004, claims 1-30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Bock 1,947,456 patent in view of the Chichester et al. 3,173,431 patent (Chichester).

The Examiner is thanked for the courtesy of providing an interview to applicant's attorney and a representative of the assignee on June 2, 2004. During the interview, the applicants discussed distinctions between Bock and Chichester, the current independent claims, claims 1, 6, 14, 19, 23 and newly submitted independent claims 34, 42, 47 and 56-58.

All of previously pending claims 1-30 were rejected as being unpatentable over the combination of Bock and Chichester. Bock was said to disclose a coin hopper 22, a sorted coin container 44 positioned below the coin hopper, a coin slide 21 positioned below the coin hopper and a coin separating and sorting assembly, formed by elements 28, 25, 24 and 23 located between the coin hopper and the coin slide. The coin separating and sorting assembly was said to comprise a separating wheel 25 including at least one coin receiving aperture 27 and a toroidal flange 29 extending away from a face of the separating wheel.

With regard to independent claim 1, a discussion was had concerning the failure of Bock to disclose a toroidal flange on the separating wheel. The toroidal flange 29 mentioned in the Office Action is really a leaf spring 29 mounted on the inner edge of plate 21, considered to be the coin slide in the Office Action. It is a separate element from the pickup disc 24 of Bock. Thus, Bock neither teaches nor discloses a flange which is toroidally shaped, i.e., a solid surface generated by a closed curve rotating about, but not intersecting or containing, an axis in its own plane. This is in contrast with the claimed invention. In this regard, reference is made to Figs. 2 and 3 of the drawings wherein a toroidal flange 84 is clearly

illustrated.

Moreover, during the interview, the Examiner was shown an embodiment of applicant's sorting assembly including the separating wheel 80 and the wheel housing 60.

During the interview, it was agreed that applicant would amend claim 1 to add a recitation that the toroidal flange fully encloses an outer perimeter of the at least one coin receiving opening formed in the separating wheel. Claim 1 has been suitably amended to so recite. As a result, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 is in patentable condition over the applied combination of Bock and Chichester, as well as the remainder of the cited art.

Claims 2-5, since they merely further patentably define the detailed subject matter of their parent claim or each other are also believed to be in condition for allowance over the art of record.

Independent claim 6, as amended herein, was also discussed during the interview. Claim 6 recites, among other elements, a ring-shaped separating wheel including at least one coin receiving aperture. Such a separating wheel 80 is clearly illustrated in Figs. 2 and 3 of the instant application's drawings. No such ring-shaped separating wheel is disclosed in the applied references of Bock and Chichester. Rather, both Bock and Chichester disclose a plate-like wheel 25 in Bock and 22 in Chichester. Therefore, claim 6 is also believed to be in patentable condition over the applied references, as well as the remainder of the cited art.

Dependent claims 7-9, since they merely further patentably define the detailed subject matter of their parent claim are also believed to be in condition for allowance.

Independent claim 14 recites first and second coin support surfaces wherein the second coin support surface is oriented approximately perpendicular to the first

coin support surface. Claim 14 also recites that the second coin support surface is defined on the wheel housing.

In the Office Action, it was stated that Bock discloses a wheel housing 10 on which the separating wheel 25 is supported with the wheel housing including a toroidal channel 30 in which the toroidal flange of the separating wheel is accommodated (note that spring 29 enters and exits channels 30). A coin support surface 27 was said to be provided on one of the separating wheel and the wheel housing. A coin rolling surface 28 was said to be defined on one of the separating wheel and the wheel housing. In this regard, it was stated that the surface ring 28 also acts as a rolling surface, since when coins contact it, they roll along it as they are propelled by the separating wheel. Finally, it was stated that the at least one coin receiving aperture and the separating wheel includes a curved leading edge 27 having a radius of curvature only slightly larger than a diameter of the largest size coin to be accommodated by the leading edge, since it would be intended that the largest coin also be handled by the apparatus and therefore fit into the separating wheel appropriately.

Bock was asserted to disclose a coin rolling surface 28. Numeral 28 in Bock refers to a ring mounted between an outer ring 21 of the housing and a rim of the supporting plate 10 (see page 2, lines 29-34). It is noted that the ring 28 is said to extend inwardly a sufficient distance so as to underlie the recesses 27 of the pickup disc 24. However, Bock neither teaches nor discloses a second coin support surface defined on the wheel housing with the second surface being oriented approximately perpendicular to the first coin support surface, which is provided on one of the separating wheel and the wheel housing. Therefore, it is believed that claim 14 is also in condition for allowance over the applied references, as well as the

remainder of the art of record.

Dependent claims 15-18, since they merely further patentably define the detailed subject matter of their parent claim or each other are also believed to be in condition for allowance.

Independent claim 19 recites first and second coin support surfaces wherein the first surface supports a face of the associated coin and the second support surface supports an edge of the associated coin. Also, the second coin support surface is defined on the wheel housing.

As mentioned above, with regard to claim 14, it is respectfully submitted that Bock neither teaches nor discloses such a coin separating and sorting assembly. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 19 patentably defines over Bock in view of Chichester, as well as the remainder of the cited art.

Dependent claims 20 and 22 which merely further patentably define the detailed subject matter of their parent claim are also believed to be in condition for allowance.

As to Chichester, it was stated that while Bock does not disclose the subject matter which is recited in claims 12, 13 and 21, Chichester does. Claims 12 and 13 have been cancelled without prejudice, but claim 21 remains. The disclosure of Chichester has to do with a separating wheel having a plurality of apertures with diameters large enough to accommodate a diameter of the largest coin meant to be sorted and wherein the diameter of the largest coin meant to be sorted is smaller than twice the diameter of the smallest diameter coin meant to be sorted so that two of the smallest diameter ones of the coins meant to be sorted cannot fit into one aperture. Chichester was also said to disclose a coin separating member with at least one aperture that has a trailing edge with a tapered surface that is smaller in thickness than is a thickness of the thinnest coin meant to be sorted in order to

prevent two of the coins from becoming stacked in a single aperture.

Even the asserted combination neither teaches nor discloses the subject matter of claim 21, including the second coin support surface, which is oriented approximately perpendicular to the first coin support surface, being located on the wheel housing. Thus, claim 21 is also in condition for allowance.

Independent claim 23 recites a coin separating and sorting assembly comprising a coin support surface provided on the wheel housing and a coin rolling surface defined, also on the wheel housing. It is apparent that Bock neither teaches nor discloses both support surfaces being located on the wheel housing, with neither support surface being constituted by the separating wheel or the disc 24 of Bock. The failure in Bock is not cured by Chichester. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 23 patentably defines over Bock in view of Chichester, as well as the remainder of the cited art.

Dependent claims 24-26, which merely further patentably define the detailed subject matter of their parent claim or each other are also believed to be in condition for allowance over the art of record.

New independent claim 34 recites a coin separating and sorting assembly comprising a stationary coin support surface provided on the housing and a stationary coin rolling surface provided on the housing. As mentioned previously in connection with claim 23, there is no teaching or disclosure of such a construction in Bock or in the combination of Bock and Chichester. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 34 is also in condition for allowance over the applied references, as well as the remainder of the cited art.

Dependent claims 35-41, which merely further patentably define the detailed subject matter of their parent claim or each other are also believed to be in condition for allowance over the art of record.

Independent claim 42 recites a coin bank comprising a coin separating and sorting assembly with a separating plate including a toroidal flange which extends away from a plane of the separating plate. As mentioned previously in connection with claim 1, there is no teaching or disclosure of such a coin bank in Bock or, indeed, in the combination of Bock and Chichester. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claim 42 patentably defines over the applied combination of references, as well as the remainder of the cited art. Dependent claims 42-46, since they merely further patentably define the detailed subject matter of their parent claim or each other, are also believed to be in condition for allowance over the art of record.

As mentioned during the interview, the word "radius" is being replaced with the word --diameter-- in dependent claim 46.

Independent claim 47 recites a coin separating and sorting assembly comprising a separating wheel including a toroidal flange extending away from a plane of the separating wheel. It is respectfully submitted that there is no teaching or disclosure of such a coin separating and sorting assembly in either Bock or Chichester or their combination. Therefore, claim 47 is also believed to be in condition for allowance over the applied references and the remainder of the cited art.

Dependent claims 48-55, which merely further patentably define the detailed subject matter of their parent claim or each other, are also believed to be in condition for allowance over the art of record.

However, applicant is amending claims 48-51 to replace "bank" in line 1 of each claim with --assembly--, as discussed during the interview.

Independent claim 56 recites a coin bank comprising a housing, a coin separating and sorting assembly mounted in the housing, a drawer slidably mounted

in the housing and at least one coin tube supported by the drawer and removable there from. As discussed during the interview, while Bock does disclose a set of drawers or boxes 44, there is no teaching or disclosure in Bock of coin tubes being supported by the drawer and being removable therefrom. Indeed, from a review of Fig. 1 of Bock, such coin tubes could not be accommodated in the boxes 44 since it would appear that the internal construction of the boxes, as shown in Fig. 1, make it difficult, if not impossible, for coin tubes to be held in the boxes in a manner so as to accept coins falling into the boxes. Nor would there be any reason given in Bock to have coin tubes. Chichester similarly is silent on this point. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 56 patentably defines over Bock and Chichester, as well as the remainder of the cited art.

Claim 57 recites a coin bank comprising a housing, a coin separating and sorting assembly and a plurality of coin tubes, each of which is in communication with a respective one of a plurality of coin sorting apertures. Claim 57 goes on to recite that the plurality of coin tubes is disposed at an acute angle in relation to a horizontal plane and is located approximately beneath the coin separating and sorting assembly. Since there are no coin tubes disclosed in Bock or Chichester, it is apparent that claim 57 patentably defines over these two references, as well as the remainder of the cited art.

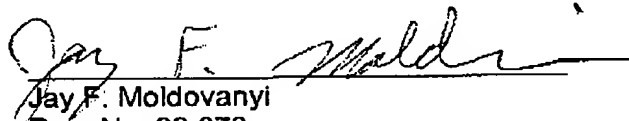
Independent claim 58 recites a coin bank comprising a housing, a coin separating and sorting assembly wherein the coin separating and sorting assembly comprises a wheel housing with a planar face which is oriented at an acute angle in relation to a horizontal plane. Claim 58 goes on to recite a plurality of coin tubes, each of which is in communication with a respective one of the plurality of coin sorting apertures. The plurality of coin tubes is oriented approximately perpendicular to a plane of the wheel housing planar face.

Since there is no teaching or disclosure of coin tubes in Bock or Chichester, it is apparent that claim 58 also patentably define over these two references, as well as the remainder of the cited art.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that Independent claim 1 and its dependent claims 2-5, independent claim 6 and its dependent claims 7-9, independent claim 14 and its dependent claims 15-18, independent claim 19 and its dependent claims 20-22, Independent claim 23 and its dependent claims 24-26, independent claim 34 and its dependent claims 35-41, independent claim 42 and its dependent claims 43-46, independent claim 47 and its dependent claims 48-55 and independent claims 56, 57 and 58 patentably define over the applied combination of references, as well as the remainder of the cited art. Allowance of these claims is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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